

Management rights in our own words



By Jenny and Mark Fenton, Bellardoo Holiday Apartments

Long time managers Jenny and Mark Fenton from Bellardoo Holiday Apartments in fabulous Mooloolaba on Queensland's Sunshine coast, write about their 12-year management rights journey.

In 2001 our family holidayed for the first time at Alexandra Headland on the Sunshine Coast and fell in love with the area. We continued to return each year for a further six years. During these holidays we became interested and intrigued with the role of the managers at the resorts and over time we approached them with interest and questions on how management rights worked. We considered that it was something we could perhaps do in the future.

Back in Auckland we read everything we could find out about management rights and eventually attended a seminar held in Auckland which was run by a team of experts in the field who had come over from Australia. This was the



Jenny and Mark Fenton

launching pad to a sea change.

Having worked in sales and the travel industry throughout our careers, we were both comfortable and familiar dealing directly with people. We both held rather stressful corporate positions in our fields and felt that we wanted a change in our lives for the forthcoming years. The management rights industry would provide new challenges and direction in addition to having the opportunity to run our own business with more control of our destiny.

We flew over to the Sunshine Coast in 2008 having enrolled ourselves into a management rights training course and during this time, with the

help of a broker, visited about 15 properties from Noosaville to Caloundra.

During this visit we actually stayed at Bellardoo which made it most interesting to experience the workings of management and the running of the property. In viewing other properties, we were able to compare them with Bellardoo. We felt that Bellardoo actually ticked all of our boxes. Location, location, location was, first and foremost, paramount in our decision making. However, in addition to the potential investment of the property, we also felt there was enormous opportunity for growth in the business itself. The manager's unit attached to the business

was like several properties - the least desirable in the block.

Nevertheless, we could appreciate that we were buying a business, this meant that the office was the engine room and money earner and our apartment was not, to the same degree, as important. On our return to New Zealand we put in an offer on Bellardoo which was accepted, we organised finance with the bank, made contact with our solicitor John Mahoney to sort through the process and prepared our move.

On July 1, 2009, we began what has become a wonderful journey for us both. We have met delightful people along the way, as well as some challenging ones. We have countless interesting and amusing stories to tell of our time here whilst enjoying a fabulous lifestyle on the Sunshine Coast. We had set ourselves a three-year goal initially but wanted to ensure that we enjoyed what we took on and quickly realised that we needed to take time out otherwise we would risk burning ourselves out. We understood that there are many challenges in this industry, but these have kept us focused and given us the

foresight to future proofing the business for the coming years.

In addition to our everyday dealings with guests/owners/tenants, we identified a real challenge with our ageing complex, so we put forward a plan to reinvent Bellardoo. Working with the body corporate committee we established areas that needed to be addressed, some were more imminent and some more long term. In 2011 the entire complex was rendered and painted, a new roof membrane was coated, and new stairwells and balcony balustrades were installed.

The complex was modernised considerably. This project took 12 months but we both felt we had accomplished enormous satisfaction from this restoration for the benefit of all owners and the complex overall which, with regular maintenance, will last for years to come. Our owners also came onboard, and most had upgrades done within their apartments during this period.

All the improvements assist in retaining the value and interest in the complex, it has been for the good of everyone.



In this business one of the biggest hurdles, which can be a challenge, is managing people's expectations. With the old star rating system, we were a 3.5-star complex. Early on our goal was to be a very good 3.5-star complex, rather than trying to push ourselves to be a poor 4 star. Our complex is set among 4- and 5-star properties which we cannot compete with due to not only the age of our

building but also the limited facilities that we can provide.

Our point of difference is to ensure we promote a family friendly, easy-going resort that's well priced and affordable to families who are more budget conscious.

We are happy with this model and feel rewarded with the high percentage of repeat business we achieve, many

of whom return each year. Our location is undoubtedly a significant drawcard.

It would be fair to say that our biggest learning curve has been dealing with the public.

While most guests have a wonderful experience during their stay at Bellardoo and on the Sunshine Coast, there are a few people that have a different agenda. ▶

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◀ These people can be a real challenge for us all. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that it is extremely important that you are a 'people person' in this business and you must be able to enjoy and interact with people well. As difficult as it can be sometimes, you need to strive to ensure that you do not let little things, that sometimes occur, drag you down.

Having a good relationship with your body corporate committee and working with them putting forward constructive views, that are for the benefit of all owners, is a must. Our committee has been very stable and

Last year, like a lot of management rights operators, we had our best in 12 years.



very supportive throughout the years we have been at Bellardoo and by working well together, it has helped keep this iconic building a favourite place for visitors to come and enjoy. We continue to look at

the big picture which enables us to remain focused and interested in delivering a good and well-respected business.

It cannot go without saying that in this industry it is vital for you to take a break.

Although the initial years are tough and hard work, we identified the importance of time out. We are fortunate that our office hours are not strict, and we therefore have the flexibility to change hours to suit our business needs.

This gives us the ability to take time out every day whether it be for a good walk, a bike ride or a bite to eat at one of the many great Mooloolaba cafes. This complements our already enjoyable lifestyle. We both have interests away from Bellardoo. Getting out is an essential part of surviving this industry.

For the future of management rights, we believe it is still very positive. We are all fully aware of the impact COVID is having on the tourism industry at the moment, but we feel we will get through it.

Last year, like a lot of management right's operators, we had our best year ever in 12 years. Obviously, people have stayed in their own state and not travelled too far afield which has worked to our advantage. However, this year is a bit different. Due to the level of uncertainty about getting caught up in lockdown, people are

more cautious about making bookings, certainly in advance. Hopefully their mindsets will change soon, and we will see some light at the end of the tunnel with the next round of school holidays and summer approaching soon after. It's inevitable that people will want to get out again and enjoy what this wonderful state has to offer.

Management rights is certainly very much a 'hands on' industry but it also can be very rewarding if you achieve good relationships and control your input and time. ■



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PROFILE FEEDBACK:

Thanks very much to you and your team for your assistance and support in creating a professional resort profile, for Oscar on Main, in your wonderful publication.

I was a little concerned that it would take a lot of time and effort on my part – something building managers are always stretched on – but your team made it very easy and took the hard work out. We were very proud our wonderful resort was featured in such a professional way.

The profile read well and told our personal story as well as that of our business and the building. It was surprising how many people saw it and commented back to us.

Many thanks for the extra copies of the magazine.

We have given them to some of

the owners and the body corporate committee members. They were really proud to see their building highlighted in the industry magazine.

Thanks for helping us to raise our profile with the Oscar on Main feature and for making it a quick and easy, professional process.

– Angela, David & Sonya
Oscar on Main, Main Beach

Thanks to the team at Resort News for profiling our property. We are really happy with the results, and the feedback from owners has been fantastic.

The article was great, and accurately reflected both our property and everything we are trying to achieve. Very much appreciated!

– Eric & Tanya Sealey,
Aqua Vista, Maroochydore

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